

FRANCE INVADES SOKOTO.

TWO EXPEDITIONS CROSS THE NIGER AND MAKE FOR THE CAPITAL.

Sokoto is the most important native State in the Sudan, and, by Treaty, is under British influence. The Royal Niger Company will assist the Sultan to repel the French.

Special Cable Despatches to THE SUN.

AKASSA, mouth of the Niger, Feb. 20.—It has been learned that two French expeditions are advancing toward the city of Sokoto. Six officers and 200 men are now at Argungu and Tanga. The Sultan of Sokoto has commanded them to halt forty miles from the capital. William Wallace, the agent of the Royal Niger Company, holds the company's forces, ammunition and stores in readiness for an advance to assist the Sultan in securing the evacuation by the French of British territory.

LONDON, Feb. 20.—The motive of the French advance upon Sokoto, in West Africa, as told in despatches from Akassa, is believed here to be a bluff by the Sultan of Sokoto, who recently accepted the effective occupation of his capital by the Royal Niger Company's troops. It is learned that the company has ordered its agent to compel the French by force, if peaceable means fail.

The total British force at Lagos and in the Gold Coast hinterland is between 5,000 and 6,000 men. These are entirely natives, with the exception of 200 white officers and instructors.

The Daily Mail to-morrow publishes an interview with an official, an ex-resident of the Gold Coast, who declares that the history of the last seventeen years shows that there has been an endeavor on the part of France to squeeze Great Britain out of West Africa.

The Standard says that the gravity of the situation is increased by the ignorance of French writers, the dangers involved by the immediate proximity of French and English troops, and British feeling as regards the issues at stake.

The paper proceeds to recall that concessions to France have been tried in many quarters of the world. The claims of England in Madagascar, Siam and Tunis, it says, have been allowed to recede before the pretensions of France.

Further concessions would only be misunderstood, and Great Britain had better take a stand firmly now. The game of marching and countermarching on territory that is indisputably British must cease. If it continued longer it will mean bloodshed and probably a general conflagration.

The Times says that the French undertake the gravity of the situation in West Africa, and adds that Great Britain cannot allow the French access to the Lower Niger. Continuing, it says:

"We cannot allow them to strangle our colonies at Lagos and on the Gold Coast as they have strangled them at Gambia and Sierra Leone."

PARIS, Feb. 20.—The Journal des Debats publishes an article expressing the views of M. Hanotaux, Minister of Foreign Affairs, on the West African situation. He says that both the French and English Governments have instructed their officers and agents in West Africa to abstain from anything that would possibly bring about a collision. The consensus of opinion in Paris is that the possibility of a conflict arising from the Niger dispute is absurd.

These French expeditions, according to the above despatches, have advanced either from Timbuktu or from some of the French posts further down on the middle Niger, and have crossed the river into the hilly country of Sokoto, the most important native State in the Western Sudan. This country with its dependencies has a population of about 15,000,000, and an area that is not much less than that of Texas. By treaty with the Sultan of Sokoto the Royal Niger Company has full sovereign power over a large part of his territory.

ROCHEFORT OUT OF LUCK.

It Related When He Went to Jail and Was Released to See the War.

Special Cable Despatches to THE SUN.

PARIS, Feb. 20.—Rain is always a more efficient agent than cavalry and swords for the preservation of order in Paris, and so it proved to-day.

M. Rochefort, the editor of *Intransigent*, went ostensibly this afternoon to the prison where he is to serve five days for libeling M. Bismarck, but instead of the expected demonstration being made only a few hundred persons under the discomfort of wet skins in order to cheer or hoot him. A large force of cavalry kept the crowd moving and there was no incident worth recording.

THE DREYFUS SECRET.

Another Story Explaining Why France Guards It So Jealously.

Special Cable Despatches to THE SUN.

LONDON, Feb. 20.—The Daily Telegraph to-morrow makes a spread on a story from Brussels to the effect that the French Government's jealousy guarded secret in the Dreyfus affair is that a secret agreement existed between Russia and Germany, by which the former undertook to furnish Germany with all information regarding the French military arrangements, while Germany was to supply similar information concerning another power, presumably Austria. Dreyfus became aware of this agreement and fled upon it.

The Finnish Fishermen Are Safe.

Special Cable Despatches to THE SUN.

ST. PETERSBURG, Feb. 20.—The 200 fishermen who were carried out into the Gulf of Finland by the breaking loose of a large tract of ice have all been saved.

Switzerland's Railroads.

Special Cable Despatches to THE SUN.

BERNE, Feb. 20.—A referendum has approved the proposal for the redemption of the Swiss railways by the State. The vote was 300,000 against 175,000.

The Carina Has Mealed.

Special Cable Despatches to THE SUN.

ST. PETERSBURG, Feb. 20.—The Carina is suffering from a mild attack of measles.

CAMPANIA NOT UP UNTIL 9 P. M.

A Rough Day and Night at Anchor in the Fog Outside.

The Cunarder Campania, bound from Liverpool and Queenstown, and, in the ordinary course of events, due here to-day, reached her pier at the foot of Clarkson street about 9 o'clock yesterday afternoon. She had anchored in the harbor at 4 o'clock, and had been waiting for the fog to clear away. She was not up until 9 p. m.

The passengers had received the news of the arrival of the ship at 3 o'clock, and had been waiting for her to arrive. She was not up until 9 p. m.

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CANNON AT JOHANNESBURG.

The Transvaal Government Is Taking Time by the Forelock.

Special Cable Despatches to THE SUN.

LONDON, Feb. 20.—A despatch to the Daily Mail from Cape Town says that the Government of the Transvaal is ostentatiously mounting guns at Johannesburg and conveying carriages, shells, rifles, and Maxim guns to that city. Eight truck loads of war material were paraded through the streets to the fort under charge of a detachment of State artillery.

The despatch adds that the lawyers of the Rand will meet to-morrow to consider the Government's action in disarming Chief Justice Kotze of the Supreme Court.

CHINA WILL OPEN THE DOOR.

Foreign Steamers May Fly on All Her Navigable Rivers.

Special Cable Despatches to THE SUN.

LONDON, Feb. 20.—A despatch to the Times from Peking says that China has agreed to open all her inland waters to navigation by steamers, whether owned by foreigners or natives, under regulations to be subsequently framed. The agreement will go into operation within four months.

China has also agreed to open one treaty port in Hunan within two years. The despatch adds that Great Britain has received satisfactory assurances that China will not alienate any portion of the Yangtze Kiang Valley to another power.

HOWE SUCCEEDED FROM THE UNION.

The Grand Army Is Now Expected to Succeed From Major Howe.

SAN FRANCISCO, Feb. 20.—Major William O. Howe, eccentric veteran of the civil war, who recently wrote to Secretary Sherman conceding with his island in Suisun Bay from the United States because Mr. Hanna was elected Senator from Ohio, will be court-martialed by the Grand Army of the Republic. Howe occupies with his family a small island off the Contra Costa shore in Suisun Bay, about thirty miles from this city. When the news came of Mr. Hanna's success Howe became excited and wrote a letter to Secretary Sherman declaring that after this election by "questionable means" he would be court-martialed.

Lyons Post, G. A. R., of Oakland, to which Howe belongs, regards his act as treason and has cited him to appear before it on March 10 to show cause why he should not be expelled. Howe declares that he will fight the case.

BULLET IN HIS BRAIN SIX WEEKS.

On Removing His Right Eye It Dropped Out, and the Patient Is Recovering.

BINGHAMTON, Feb. 20.—Frank Perkins, the chicken thief who attempted to commit suicide about six weeks ago at Police Headquarters by shooting himself in the head, is now recovering from the bullet in his brain. The bullet, which was charged from the hospital as cured, has been removed, and the patient is recovering.

Perkins, who was charged with the theft of a chicken, was shot in the head by a bullet which entered his brain. The bullet, which was charged from the hospital as cured, has been removed, and the patient is recovering.

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BOARD OF INQUIRY SAILS.

EXPECTED TO BEGIN ITS WORK ON THE MAINE TO-DAY.

On Its Report Much Depends—The President Has the Poorest Confidence in the Officers Composing the Board, and Will Accept Its Findings as Final—Military and Naval Preparations Are Being Made in Accordance With a Long Understood Programme.

WASHINGTON, Feb. 20.—With the sailing of the Naval Board of Inquiry from Key West to Havana to-day, an announcement, a despatch to the Navy Department from Admiral Sigsbee, the President and Secretary Long and official Washington generally have been partly relieved from the tension of the last few days. Nobody knows, not even the members of the board, how soon their report will be in the possession of the Government, but the general understanding is that, while a careful investigation will be made, the board will expedite its work and furnish the Navy Department with all the information it obtains within a very short period. The seriousness of the duty to which the board has been assigned is fully appreciated by the department. Sigsbee, to-day, however, in a despatch to the President, the men composing the board, and naval officers generally are agreed that more capable and reliable selections could not have been made, and that the Government will make no mistake in accepting without question every finding reported.

On a report to be submitted by Capt. Sampson and his associates may depend the continuance of friendly relations between Spain and the United States. This fact is recognized here in every branch of official life, and the gravity of the result dependent on the inquiry of the four naval officers is fully appreciated.

The knowledge that the relations of this country and Spain are in a more critical condition than at any time since the beginning of the Cuban war has sobered even those persons connected with the Government who have been inclined to express their hostility without reserve. Everybody has become serious, and there is a general obedience to the request of Capt. Sigsbee that judgment be suspended.

To-day has not been marked by any unusual happening, and the lack of excitement has given people a chance to think over the situation calmly. To-night there is every evidence that everybody connected with the Government is willing to await, calmly as they can, the judgment of the Board of Inquiry. This feeling will continue there is little doubt, although rumors of foul play are in the air and are accepted without question even by some of those who do not want the Administration to act without being firmly convinced that the sinking of the Maine was the result of treachery.

The photographs of the shattered remains of the once magnificent battleship have been examined with the greatest interest to-day by naval officers, who have not, however, been able to base any new theories as to the cause of the disaster on these views of the dismasted wreck. The fact that the bow of the vessel is entirely under water, while the after part projects above the water, is accounted for by a difference in the depth of the channel beneath the wreck. According to the accounts from Havana the Maine sank stern foremost, and when the keel touched bottom the bow began to sink, and the condition of the vessel is entirely under water, while the after part projects above the water, is accounted for by a difference in the depth of the channel beneath the wreck.

How readily a great battleship can be sunk with a comparatively small charge of high explosive is shown by the sinking of the Maine. The vessel was not sunk until it was struck by a torpedo, and the explosion was so great that the ship was broken in two. The explosion was so great that the ship was broken in two.

The report on the sinking of the Aquidaban says that 125 pounds of gun cotton, in a Schwartzkopf type of torpedo, exploded under her bow and sent her to the bottom in shallow water, where she was found by divers. The report on the sinking of the Aquidaban says that 125 pounds of gun cotton, in a Schwartzkopf type of torpedo, exploded under her bow and sent her to the bottom in shallow water, where she was found by divers.

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PREPARING FOR EMERGENCIES.

The Government Carrying Out Its Plans to Provide for the National Defense.

WASHINGTON, Feb. 20.—As told in THE SUN this morning, the military and naval branches of the Federal Government are making preparations for several months to meet any emergency. Some of these preparations have been recalled to public attention since the Maine disaster, and great significance has been given them by those who did not know, or, if they did know, had forgotten what had been done in the past. But enough precaution have been and are being taken to justify the assertion that if war should come the United States will not be unprepared and there need be no fear on the part of the patriotic public that the Government, however much it desires to maintain friendly relations with all the world, is not doing its utmost to provide for the national defense.

When the Navy Department issued orders for the North Atlantic squadron to resume in the Gulf of Mexico the regular programme of winter exercises, which had been suspended for three years on account of Spanish quarrels, little significance was attached to the news.